

to have her picture taken in the uniform that would have been worn by her predecessors around the time of her birth, and to use the photograph in an interpretive program. One of the smocks was lent to Zion, through the curator, along with the bright orange polka dot arrowhead-embazoned scarf that historically went with it. Kaim arranged to be photographed in the outfit, under the curator's supervision, and has since used the photograph in her evening programs to show visitors how a female ranger would have dressed some 20 years ago.

Stuff and More Stuff

Each year, the fifth-grade class at the Yellowstone National Park Elementary School in Mammoth Hot Springs reads a book that is a childhood favorite of many future curators, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. This E.L. Konigsburg 1967 classic, which tells of two children who run away from home and live secretly in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, raises many questions in children's minds about how museums work, and why they have so much "stuff." So teacher Tana Sholly follows up on the book by bringing her students to the Albright Visitor Center for a behind-the-scenes look at the park's museum collection, and a chat with curatorial staff about what curators do and how they pick out objects for their collections. Archeological sur-

face finds and modern souvenirs are used to illustrate how curators decide what they must and should add to their museum's collection. Tours through museum storage and visitor center exhibits provoke discussion about how the park gets the animals that are made into taxidermic mounts, the hazards of working with certain collections, and how and why wealthy individuals like Mrs. Frankweiler—as well as many other types of people—donate their collections to museums like Yellowstone's. The students discover that only a small percentage of what a museum has is on exhibit at one time, but that all of its holdings require and deserve specialized care.

Yellowstone National Park is fortunate to have museum collections and archives that are recognized by many for their national and international significance. The above examples represent merely a sampling of the ways in which Yellowstone's diverse collections are depended upon and creatively used every day to educate, inspire, improve the quality of the visitor experience, entertain, and to make intelligent, informed decisions on the management of park resources.

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Duery Felton and Tony Porco

Mementos and Memories

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection

The public's reaction to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has led to an incredible collection of "things" that have been left at the Memorial by the visitor. Because many people cannot come to the nation's capital, we have tried to find ways to get this collection out to the public. This article describes some of the ways that we have achieved this.

The exhibition, "Personal Legacy: The Healing of a Nation," represents the first showing of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection (VVMC), as well as a collaboration of the National Park Service, the Smithsonian Institution, and a private foundation that raised money for the exhibition. This temporary exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History has now been extended indefinitely, allowing us to rotate objects in and out of the exhibit. Rotation of the objects in the exhibit is a tricky undertaking, as objects removed will have to be replaced with like



objects as well as objects from specific time periods in order to fit into the theme of the exhibit.

Representatives from the Republic of Germany have requested input concerning the proposal in Germany to convert several of the former WWII concentration camps into museums. This conversation is merely an extension of how the VVMC has become the flagship museum source for other exhibition and memorial projects. Organizations seeking VVMC knowledge has included the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, the Holocaust Museum, the New York Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the New Hampshire Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission, and the Gettysburg College special exhibition library.

The Museum of Our National Heritage hosted a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection exhibition "Gathered at the Wall: America and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial" for six months. Part of this exhibit included comment books for the visitors to express their thoughts. The museum will forward copies of its "comments book" for the collection. This is significant, as visitors filled three or four books articulating their views on the exhibition.

The VVMC staff is in the final stages of preparation for a project that will result in 1,000 CD-ROM photo images. These images will be used for research and publications.

The interest in the VVMC seems to extend to the youth of the nation as well. The director of the New Jersey Children's Museum has contacted the VVMC with an exhibition request. Visitation at the museum consists of children between 4 and 12 years of age. The VVMC staff has spent time consulting with the director in an effort to understand the mission of the museum and their expectations.

Turner Publishing, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia, has released the much awaited and heralded, collaborated book of representative images of objects from the VVMC. The highly-touted and well-received *Offerings at the Wall* has met the expectations of both the NPS and Turner. As part of the ongoing promotion campaign, the VVMC staff is still being employed to speak in public forums concerning the significance of the VVMC, the book, and the caretakers of the collection—the NPS. Turner has agreed to put a statement in their advertising of the book about the National Park Service and their role in preserving this collection, and urging the public to aid this important mission with their contributions.

A new exhibit recently opened at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The exhibition is entitled "A Place of Tribute: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial." The VVMC exhibition opened in May 1995, and is scheduled to run until January 1996. During the

month of May, Curator Duery Felton attended and made a presentation at a teachers' symposium in anticipation of the opening.

A CD-ROM has been developed by Magnet Interactive Studios that will simulate a visit to the memorial. Viewers can walk down the pathway and interact with objects or faces on the memorial. Actual photographs of collection objects are contained in this program. Visitors can also learn about the war itself, the construction of the memorial, look up names on the Wall, and produce a rubbing of any name on the memorial. This product is for both educational purposes and for people who cannot come to the memorial.

VVMC staff members continue to field inquiries for other VVMC associated exhibitions from as far away as the west coast, and it is expected that there will be VVMC exhibitions throughout the country. Owing to the fact that the Vietnam War was a "multi-flag operation" and involved, at least directly, approximately 29 nations, there may be an opportunity and request for foreign collaborated exhibitions. As with the Turner book, exhibitions are an alternative form of physical access that allows the public to partake of the VVMC and to appreciate the efforts of the NPS/NCA to preserve and conserve this epic chapter of U.S.-World history. The publication of books and the exhibitions meet the responsibilities of government museum organizations to display, exhibit, and interpret those collections under its purview.

The VVMC Volunteer-in-the-Parks program is an immense help to the efforts to catalog, store, and interpret the collection. Our volunteers are primarily off-site. They do research, provide expertise and knowledge, and write, call, or fax us back with their information. Often, the objects in the collection are obscure or hard to identify; they have helped us with this time and again. We also have a few volunteers who help us with the physical tasks, such as sorting and storing.

Duery Felton, a Vietnam War veteran from Washington, DC, began working on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Collection in 1986 as a volunteer. He is now the curator of this growing collection.

Tony Porco has been the museum technician for the collection since 1990. The VVMC is housed in the Museum and Archeological Research and Support (MARS) facility. The authors can be contacted through cc:Mail.